

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1                   1. A method of processing information as documents on a network,  
2 wherein a client request is a document and a response from an agency server to the client  
3 request is also a document, the method comprising the steps of:  
4       addressing the client request to the agency server;  
5       coupling an agent card to the agency server, wherein the agent card includes response  
6       functionality;  
7       following the coupling of the agent card to the agency server, instantiating an agent  
8       object with a state derived from data stored on the agent card; and  
9       when a document is received at the agency server and is to be acted upon by the  
10       agent object, passing at least a reference of the document to the agent object.
- 1                   2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of instantiating an agent object  
2 is a step of either instantiating the agent object on the agency server or instantiating the  
3 agent object on the agent card.
- 1                   3. A networked information appliance for use on a network, comprising:  
2 a plurality of agency base units, wherein each agency base unit is configured on the  
3 network with an address; and  
4 a plurality of agent cards, wherein each agent card includes state for at least one  
5 response functionality that is provided to a user of the network at an address  
6 dependent on the address of the agency base unit into which the agent card is  
7 mounted, wherein a response functionality implements one or more functions of  
8 responding to document requests.
- 1                   4. The networked information appliance of claim 3, wherein the plurality  
2 of agency base units are coupled to an agency device and the agency device is an HTTP  
3 server.
- 1                   5. The networked information appliance of claim 3, wherein state of an  
2 agent card is stored as an XML file in a file system on the agent card.

1           6. The networked information appliance of claim 3, wherein  
2 transformations of documents as described by a tagset are stored as a tagset file in a file  
3 system on the agent card.

1           7. The networked information appliance of claim 3, wherein each agent  
2 card includes program instructions for applying transforms specified in a tagset to a  
3 document.

1           8. The networked information appliance of claim 3, wherein the agent  
2 cards include state, tagsets and data in a static file structure.

1           9. The networked information appliance of claim 3, wherein the agent  
2 cards include state, tagsets and data in a file structure and on-card processing for  
3 processing messages received from an agency through a message passing interface.

1           10. The networked information appliance of claim 3, wherein the agency  
2 includes processing logic and means for signaling an ejection request, wherein the  
3 processing logic causes a state of an agent card to be written to the agent card prior to the  
4 agent card being removed from the agency unit.

1           11. A networked information appliance for use on a network, comprising:  
2 a plurality of agency base units, wherein each agency base unit is configured on the  
3 network with an address and is coupled to an HTTP server; and  
4 a plurality of agent cards, wherein each agent card includes state, stored as an XML  
5 file in an agent card file system, for at least one response functionality that is  
6 provided to a user of the network at an address dependent on the address of the  
7 agency base unit into which the agent card is mounted, wherein a response  
8 functionality implements one or more functions of responding to document  
9 requests.